

Bird Stamps of Belgium: TBC-Post

Part One

Introduction

When you think of Belgian bird stamps, obviously you turn to the long running series of definitives created by André Buzin. But the Buzin issues and Bpost are not the only Belgian source of bird images on stamps.

This blog focuses on the bird issues of TBC-Post, of which there are a few to admire and collect.

Who are TBC-Post?

TBC-Post is a private sector postal operator based in Zaventem in Flanders, located just outside and to the North East of the Brussels city region. TBC-Post has been in existence for some 35 years and operates business postal services. TBC-Post also provides postal services to individuals through its appointed retail agents (who sell the TBC-Post stamps as well as act as collecting points for mail). TBC-Post also has a network of its own post-boxes from which its operatives collect the post deposited in them¹. An image of a TBC-Post post-box is shown below:



The blue TBC-Post post-box

Source: <https://www.tbc-post.info/>

The location of all the post-boxes and locations where you can buy the TBC-Post stamps and deposit mail is also available on google maps².

¹ Source: <https://www.tbc-post.info/>

² [TBC-Post – Google My Maps](#)

There is a short You Tube video made by the company which provides further information on TBC-Post's services. This can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StepXsXo1D4>.

How are TBC-Post's postage rates organised?

TBC-Post's tariff has two postage rates for letters posted by individual customers, equating to first class post ("Prior") and second class ("Eco"). Geographically, the tariff distinguishes post for Belgium (BE), Europe (EU), and then the Rest of the World. Illustrative rates from the 2021 tariff are indicated below, with Bpost rates footnoted for comparison:

Prior Rates [First Class]	Eco Rates [Second Class]
BE-1 (0 < 50g): €1.60 ³	€1.05 ⁴
EU-1 (0 < 50g): €1.91 ⁵	€1.91
ROW (0 < 50g) €2.13 ⁶	€2.13

The TBC-Post stamps are available with the rate designation printed on them: viz "BE-1", "EU-1", or "ROW-1". Weights above 50g are posted at rates which are multiples of the base rate. For example, a large letter weighing 50-100g to a Belgian destination would cost €3.20, for which you can buy a BE-2 stamp at €3.20. Alternatively, a very large letter weighing 100g-350g for a European destination (outside Belgium) would cost €11.46, for which you can buy an EU-3 stamp, or use six EU-1 stamps.

In addition to these basic rates, TBC-Post also offers registered (signed for) postage as well as premium same day delivery services. It has also made available franked envelopes in various sizes, with and without windows; and some with illustrations.

Format of the TBC-Post Stamps

TBC-Post has issued stamps since 2011. The stamps are generally issued and sold in sheets of 10. The individual stamps measure (approximately) 31mm wide by 26mm deep. All of the stamps are self-adhesive. There is an authoritative catalogue of the TBC-Post issues from 2011 to 2015, edited by De Temmerman Kris en Roland⁷, which provides a wealth of information on each stamp issue, as well as on the FDC postcards and envelopes. Amongst other things, the catalogue provides details of the different backing papers used to support the stamps, as well as information on print numbers.

³ Comparison: Bpost €1.57 standard definitive; €1.67 special stamp

⁴ Comparison: Bpost €1.07 standard definitive; €1.17 special stamp

⁵ Comparison: Bpost €1.85 standard definitive; €2.12 special stamp

⁶ Comparison: Bpost €2.07 standard definitive; €2.12 special stamp

⁷ Timbres-Poste et Entiers Postaux, TBC-Post, Edition 2015. [In French and Flemish].

The TBC-Post Bird Stamp Designs

One of the designs from the TBC-Post catalogue features the African Penguin (*Sheniscus demersus*), endangered native resident of southern Africa, found along the coastal areas of South Africa (in particular), as well as on the coasts of both Namibia and (less so) Mozambique.

The stamps include 10 different images of the African Penguin. A quite like the five in cartoon sequence that look as though the Penguins are guiding an aircraft into its docking location.



Sheet of 10 Stamps: 7 August 2014

Source: <https://www.tbc-post.info/webshop> and author's collection.

According to Birdlife International, there were around 20,850 pairs (41,700 individuals) of the African Penguin in southern Africa in 2015, which equates to around 66,720 individuals in adult plumage, based on a conversion rate of 3.2 for each pair to individuals. The available data shown on

the Data Zone indicates that since 1978, the population of the African Penguin has been in decline in both Namibia and South Africa⁸.

Penguins World⁹ provides additional information on the African Penguin, not least providing alternative names: Jackass Penguin (which comes from the braying sound that they can make, similar to a donkey); Black-footed Penguin and Cape Penguin¹⁰. Apparently, these penguins have a potential life-span of 10-12 years and can grow to around 62cm in height¹¹.

The African Penguin hunts in packs and lives on a diet of sardines, herring and anchovies. When not swimming for food, the African Penguin is a sedentary bird.

The population of African Penguins has inevitably been affected by human interventions: some direct, disturbing the colonies through egg collection (which apparently is now illegal). Equally, however, changes in fishing have affected the supply of food sources for the African Penguin. But the most dramatic impact on the population has come from oil pollution caused by spills from shipping vessels.¹²

Unfortunately, according to Data Zone, the conservation efforts so far at South African national level have not been wholly successful and modified/updated plans were being prepared for prospective implementation in 2020.



First Day Postcard: 2 August 2015. Second issue of the Penguins Stamps.

⁸ <http://datazone.birdlife.org/species/factsheet/african-penguin-spheniscus-demersus/text>

⁹ <https://www.penguins-world.com/african-penguin/>

¹⁰ Cape Penguin: from <https://animalia.bio/african-penguin>

¹¹ 60-68cm: from <https://animalia.bio/african-penguin>

¹² <http://datazone.birdlife.org/species/factsheet/african-penguin-spheniscus-demersus/text>



Sheet of 10 stamps: 2 August 2015

Source: <https://www.tbc-post.info/webshop> and author's collection

The second sheetlet featuring the African Penguin includes two stamps from the previous sheet: these appear in the bottom row of the sheet. The stamp on the bottom right is the one that is included on the postcard.

End of Part One

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